

**Subject: Invitation to participate in NWFSC Data Program Review from  
Director John E. Stein**

Dear Colleague,

Peer review is as important in the management and conduct of scientific programs as it is in scientific inquiry and discovery. On a regular basis we at NOAA Fisheries conduct systematic peer reviews at all regional science centers and the Office of Science and Technology to ensure our science continues to be rigorous, respected, reliable, and responsive.

I invite you to participate in a review of the data collected to support west coast groundfish stock assessments as managed under the Magnuson - Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act. This review will take place at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center's Montlake Laboratory in Seattle, Washington on September 17th-20th, 2013. For context, next year's program review topic will be stock assessment methodology. Thus, this review is on the data used in stock assessments.

A team of national and international experts will conduct the peer review. The reviewers will consider both fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data sources. Reviewers will provide recommendations to the Center on the direction and quality of these data collection and management programs. The agenda will include opportunities for input by members of the public each day. We will post related documents throughout the process on our Center website at:  
[http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/news/events/program\\_reviews/program\\_review\\_calif.cfm](http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/news/events/program_reviews/program_review_calif.cfm)

Data quality and transparency are essential to our efforts to provide the highest standard of science to inform management decisions. I expect this review will highlight our strengths but also identify areas where improvement is merited, and help us to chart a course to advance our data collection, management, and use. As the Science and Research Director for the Northwest Region, I consider peer reviews critical for evaluating our science as we incorporate innovative ideas and adapt to new challenges.

I hope that you can find time to join us for all or part of this review, whether in person in Seattle or by visiting our program review website.

John